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UNITED STATES.

[Reports to the Supervising Surgeon-General United States Marine-Hospital Service.]

Report on smallpox at Newton and Pinckard, Ala.

BIRMINGHAM, ALA., February 2, 1898.

SIR: In obedience to telegraphic order of January 26, I have the honor to state that I visited Newton and Pinckard on January 30 and 31, and will give below the result of my investigation.

Pinckard is a town with a population of about 500 people, with probably 400 more within a radius of 2 miles. Smallpox appeared there in August, since which time about 50 cases have developed in the town and vicinity; about 25 cases in various stages of the diseases are now there. No statistics are available, no record having been kept of the cases, so the above figures are approximate only and probably fall short of the true number, especially as the physicians were in doubt for some time as to the true nature of the disease. Only 1 white person has been attacked and no death has occurred. Vaccination is not compulsory and no attempt at isolation or disinfection has been made. I was informed that probably 50 per cent of the population of the town had been vaccinated, but in the suburbs very few had availed themselves of this measure of protection.

The mayor and town council have, until recently, manifested but little interest in the matter, and, I am informed, rejected an offer made by the county judge to erect a pesthouse and cooperate with them in taking measures to suppress the outbreak.

Newton is situated 4 miles from Pinckard and has a population of about 700. The first case of smallpox was reported January 15, and since this time 7 have appeared; all negroes. Vaccination is not compulsory and has been but little practiced. The inmates of infected houses have been ordered to remain indoors, and are fined if found upon the streets. This town, like Pinckard, has almost no funds available for quarantine purposes and looks to the county for aid. The mayor is

alive to the situation, and has promised to make vaccination compulsory and appoint a physician to vaccinate free of charge.

At the request of the mayors of the two towns, I called on the county judge at Ozark and he readily agreed to build a pesthouse accessible to both localities and aid in every way possible. I advised the officials of both towns as to the methods now being employed here and suggested that they follow the same course, which they promised to do. As to the thoroughness with which it will be performed I am not able to form an opinion.

Very respectfully,

G. M. MAGRUDER,
Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.

Decrease of smallpox in Jefferson County, Ala.

BIRMINGHAM, ALA., February 7, 1898.

SIR: I have the honor to report considerable diminution in the number of smallpox cases occurring in this locality since the Service assumed control on January 9, as will be seen from the following table:

Cases of smallpox occurring by weeks.

Places.	Week ended—			
	Jan. 15.	Jan. 22.	Jan. 29.	Feb. 5.
Birmingham.....	12	14	9	3
Bessemer.....	32	29	16	9
Other points in Jefferson County.....	26	10	3	6
Total.....	70	63	28	18

In Talladega results have been more gratifying. Service aid was asked early in the epidemic and prompt action was taken. Work was commenced on January 18, at which time there were 37 cases of smallpox in the city. Only 4 cases have since appeared in town and 2 among the suspects in detention camp. No case has developed since January 30.

In Jefferson County cases will, I fear, continue to appear for some time yet. Smallpox having existed here in epidemic form since last July, infection is broadly scattered; cases, also, from adjacent counties are constantly finding their way into this city and county, carrying infection with them, and as quite a number of persons will evade the inspectors and avoid vaccination, material will be furnished to keep the disease alive for some time, I fear. Moreover, the officials of a few towns have refused to make vaccination compulsory, or have failed to prosecute where such ordinance already existed, and the inspectors met with such opposition from the people that I was forced to withdraw them after having accomplished but little in the way of vaccination. This was especially the case in Pratt City, a town of about 3,000 inhabitants, situated 5 miles from Birmingham.

The second house-to-house inspection of Birmingham is nearly completed, and a third partial one will be made, confining the inspectors to the portion of the city inhabited by negroes. Bessemer will be worked in the same manner.

Very respectfully,

G. M. MAGRUDER,
Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.